

***Honored as "2008 Champion of Polio Eradication"***

**Washington, D.C.** – Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-04) was recognized by the Rotary Club International today as a “2008 Champion of Polio Eradication.” Rotary Club representatives honored the Congresswoman, along with other lawmakers, for her efforts to support polio eradication around the world.

“Eradicating polio is within our reach if we have the political will and financial commitment to make it happen,” McCollum said today. “The Rotary Club deserves our thanks and praise for their tremendous leadership toward a polio-free planet.”

Rep. McCollum is the Chair and Co-Founder of the Congressional Global Health Caucus, which emphasizes U.S. action to foster basic health and quality of life across the globe. Polio eradication is essential to improving global health.

In 1988, Rotary International partnered with the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and the U.S. Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention (CDC) to launch the Global Polio Eradication Initiative—the largest and most far-reaching public health initiative of all time. Since then, polio cases worldwide have declined by over 99%, with GPEI's immunization efforts saving 5 million people from paralysis and prevented 250,000 polio deaths.

Once a global disease of pandemic proportions, polio is now present in only nine countries around the world. Rotary International has committed \$850 million to completely eradicate the disease.

Other recipients of the 2008 Champion of Polio Eradication award are Sens. Boxer (D-CA), Brownback (R-KS), Corker (R-TN), and Lugar (R-IN), and Reps. Rothman (D-NJ), Roybal Allard (D-CA), Royce (R-CA), Walsh (R-NY), and Wolf (R-VA).

Photos from the event are attached.

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